

The Office Action further states that claim 17 is inoperative since the surface of the wood substrate cannot be wetted after coating step (c). Claim 17 has been amended to address the comments by the Examiner. The surface of the teak substrate after coating (i.e., step (c)) is now identified as the "coated surface". Claim 17 has further been amended to consistently identify the substrate to be finished as teak. Punctuation has also been corrected in step (c). The amendments to the claims are supported in the specification as originally filed. No new matter has been added.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the rejection to the specification as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter has been overcome and should be withdrawn.

Claims 11-13 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention.

Claims 11-13 and 17 have been amended to address the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Specifically, claims 11 and 13 have been amended to remove the letter designation "(a)" from each claim as suggested by the Examiner. Claim 12 has been amended to properly depend from claim 11. Claim 17 has been amended as discussed above. In view of the foregoing amendments to claims 11-13 and 17, it is submitted that the rejection of claims 11-13 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, has been overcome and should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 8 and 13-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hoogstoel (U.S. Patent No. 3,607,540).

Hoogstoel reports a method of applying a sheet material having a pressure sensitive adhesive layer on one surface thereof to a substrate. The method includes the steps of: (a) forming on the surface of the substrate to which the pressure sensitive adhesive coated sheet material is to be applied a temporary liquid barrier layer, the barrier layer being a nonsolvent for the pressure-sensitive adhesive layer and being of poor cohesive strength relative to the adhesive

layer; (b) applying said sheet material to said liquid barrier with the pressure sensitive adhesive in contact with the liquid barrier; (c) sliding the sheet material whereby the barrier layer shears and permits the sheet material to be properly positioned relative to the substrate; and (d) keeping the sheet material in the proper position while the temporary liquid barrier dissipates by evaporation or absorption thereby fixing said sheet material in position relative to the substrate with the adhesive surface in direct contact with the substrate.

Hoogstoel does not teach or suggest applicants' claimed method of finishing a wood surface for exterior exposure of the wood, which includes the steps of:

- (a) providing a finishing film material in the form of a sheet, said finishing material comprising:
 - (i) a flexible polymeric sheet material having a first major surface and a second major surface;
 - (ii) a pressure sensitive adhesive layer covering at least a portion of the first major surface of the sheet material;
- (b) providing a wood substrate having a surface; and
- (c) adhering the adhesive layer of the finishing film material to the surface of the wood by placing the adhesive layer of the finishing film in contact with the surface of the wood substrate and optionally applying pressure over at least a portion of the second major surface of the polymeric sheet material.

The method of Hoogstoel is directed to applying adhesive coated wallpaper to a substrate. Hoogstoel does not teach or suggest a method of finishing a wood substrate with a polymer sheet material for exterior exposure of the wood. Although Hoogstoel reports that the substrate may be wood, the outcome of the method of Hoogstoel is to apply wallpaper in order to cover the wood substrate. Applicants' claimed method is a method of finishing the wood substrate so that the wood can be exposed to outdoor environmental conditions. Hoogstoel does not teach or suggest a method of finishing a wood substrate as claimed by applicants. The method of Hoogstoel would not leave the wood exposed, but rather, would mask or cover the wood. In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that Hoogstoel does not anticipate, nor render obvious, claims 1, 8 and 13-14. Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) is respectfully requested.

The remaining rejections relate only to dependent claims (i.e., claims 2-16), which should be allowable if pending claim 1 is found to be allowable.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Allowance of claims 1-17 at an early date is respectfully requested.

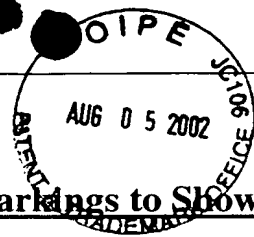
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Version With Markings to Show Changes Made

11 (amended). The method of claim 1, further including the step of:

[(a)] coating the surface of the wood substrate with a liquid coating composition comprising a polymer or polymer precursor dispersed or dissolved in a liquid.

12 (amended). The method of claim [8] 11, wherein the liquid coating composition comprises an aliphatic polyurethane polymer dispersed or dissolved in a solvent.

13 (amended). The method of claim 1, further including the step of:

[(a)] wetting the surface of the wood substrate with a wetting solution prior to adhering the adhesive.

17 (amended). A method of finishing a [wood] teak surface for exterior exposure of the [wood] teak, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a finishing film material in the form of a sheet, said finishing material comprising:

- (i) a flexible aliphatic polyurethane sheet material having a first major surface and a second major surface;
- (ii) an acrylic pressure sensitive adhesive layer covering at least a portion of the first major surface of the sheet material;

(b) providing a teak substrate having a surface;

(c) coating the surface of the [wood] teak substrate with a liquid coating composition comprising a polymer or polymer precursor dispersed or dissolved in a liquid[.] to form a coated surface;

(d) wetting the coated surface of the [wood] teak substrate with a wetting solution; and

(e) adhering the adhesive layer of the finishing film material to the coated surface of the [wood] teak substrate by placing the adhesive layer of the finishing film in contact with the coated surface of the [wood] teak substrate and optionally applying pressure and/or heat to at least a portion of the finishing film.

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